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June 9, 1999

BY FACSIMILE

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Lew:

This letter responds to the June 4, 1999 letter from Acting Administrator Donald Arbuckle to our May 11th letter addressed to you about the Paperwork Reduction Act. The June 4th letter is unacceptable and nonresponsive to our oversight needs.

Our May 11th letter elaborated on questions asked during the Subcommittee's April 15th hearing of Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Acting Deputy Director for Management about OMB's review of and action on the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) paperwork budget submission. Since OMB was unable to provide any substantive answers about IRS' paperwork budget submission, we requested that OMB complete a chart showing the number of substantive changes made by OMB, if any, to each department and agency's paperwork budget submission and the number of additional paperwork reduction candidates independently identified by OMB, if any, for each department and agency. OMB's June 4th reply did not include a completed chart or any numeric information for any of the agencies included in OMB's Information Collection Budget of the United States Government.

Instead, OMB's response claimed "There is no ongoing record of the individual exchanges [between OMB and the agencies]." This is mind boggling! If there is no record of individual exchanges between OMB's desk officers and the agencies which OMB oversees, how does OMB management evaluate the performance of individual OMB desk officers and the agencies' responsiveness to OMB's specific recommendations? Moreover, if there is "no record," how can Congress know - and why should Congress assume - that OMB is doing any paperwork reduction oversight at all? Therefore, the Subcommittee requests that OMB, in the future, keep a record of all substantive changes to agency paperwork budget submissions made by OMB and all additional paperwork reduction candidates independently identified by OMB.

In addition, OMB enclosed in its June 4th response a sample of two initial agency paperwork budget submissions but without any indication whatsoever of the substantive changes made by OMB or any additional paperwork reduction candidates independently identified by OMB. These sample agency documents were not requested and are not responsive to any question asked at the hearing or by the Subcommittee after the hearing. These non-germane documents are not even a poor substitute for the requested chart with quantifiable information.

In conclusion, because of our oversight responsibility, we expect OMB, starting July 1, 1999, to keep detailed and complete records so that it can provide information requested by Congress, in its oversight role, about OMB's role in government-wide paperwork reduction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. McIntosh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

David M. McIntosh

Chairman

Subcommittee on National Economic Growth,
Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs

cc: The Honorable Dan Burton
The Honorable Dennis Kucinich